



## Pray for the Nation ~ INOI MO TE MOTU

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Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD (Psalm 33:12).  
Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labour in vain.  
Unless the LORD guards the city, the guard [watchman] keeps watch in vain. (Psalm 127:1)

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### THE FOUNDATION OF A NATION

We have encouraged prayer for those people who are in authority in our country. In doing so, we have been looking at the human leadership in our nation, but ultimately what really matters is who is the supreme leader over our nation? By the grace of God, we have a believing Queen and leader over the Commonwealth of nations to which New Zealand belongs. But even above her is the **Lord God Almighty**, maker of Heaven and earth, and all that is in them! He is supreme!

Paul, in 1 Corinthians 3:11, says "No one can lay any other foundation than the one which has already been laid – and *that foundation is Jesus the Messiah.*" Jesus is Lord!

- Praise God we have an eternal, loving, almighty, all-wise, all-powerful King of kings and Lord of lords, Who watches over us for our good, and so that we might be a blessed people, as long as we follow His wonderful ways! *Pray that we will!*

Joshua said to his people – and the challenge of this is still with us today – "Choose today who you will serve, whether the gods of this world (and the results which that will bring), or the ways of the Lord and the blessings He brings. As for me and my household, *we will serve the Lord!*" (Read Joshua 24:14-28 for his full challenge). The choice is ours – both individually and as a society. Which will we choose? This world's gods, demonic gods, or the one true God? Humanism, materialism, individualism, or the God Who created us to be His people who He loves?

- **Pray** for our nation – that it will be both founded on the Rock and recognise the Lord God as its supreme authority.
- **Pray** for a turning of our people to the Lord God: for a hunger and thirst for Him, and a deep desire to follow Him and His ways.
- **Pray** for the salvation of our people.
- **Pray** for the salvation of our leaders.
- **Pray** for Godliness to prevail throughout our society.
- **Pray** for God's wisdom, and the love of God to spread throughout our land. **Pray** that God will be glorified, and pleased with what is done in our society.
- **Pray** that we will be a witness to the nations, of a nation which is following the Lord and His ways!

- *God of nations, at Your feet, in the bonds of love we meet. Hear our voices we entreat; God defend our free land. Guard Pacific's triple star, from the shafts of strife and war. Make her praises heard afar. God defend New Zealand!*

[The triple star refers to New Zealand's three main islands]

### PRAYING FOR AUTHORITIES

#### Romans 13:1-7 (NRSV)

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God.

Therefore whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad.

Do you wish to have no fear of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive its approval; for it is God's servant for your good.

But if you do what is wrong, you should be afraid, for the authority does not bear the sword in vain! It is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer.

Therefore one must be subject, not only because of wrath but also because of conscience.

For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, busy with this very thing.

Pay to all what is due them – taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honour to whom honour is due.

These verses are written primarily to Christians, and as Christians we need to obey them, no matter how much "the flesh" might resist them, especially at certain times! 'Authorities' include governmental authorities, nationwide (through our central Government), as well as regional and local government; and in many other areas too, such as our police, judiciary, in the workplace, churches, etc.

In relation to what Romans 13 says, **please pray:**

- That we will be subject to our governing authorities, praying that God will grant us good and wise leaders, who will work together to do the will of God for our nation.
- That we will not resist good government but recognise those who God has appointed over us.

- That we will recognise that good government and authority is based on what is good and best for our country overall; it is not a terror to good conduct. (We won't all agree on different issues, and no government can satisfy every individual's desires and needs, so pray that our leaders will do what is right and best overall, for us as a people).
- That we will obey the laws and directions of those God has set over us, and then we will have no need to be afraid.
- That those who do disobey, will be judged fairly, and that either the fear of punishment, or the punishment itself, will cause them to repent and change their ways. Pray for reformation of individual's lives, and for the well-being of our country as a whole.
- That we will have a sensitive conscience to what is right and wrong; that we will choose what is right, and be given God's strength and help to do what is right and pleasing to God.
- That even though we might not like, for example, paying taxes, our Government is busy trying to run our nation for the welfare of its people, which means that taxes are essential. Pray for all decisions our government needs to make – that they will be wise decisions (including taxes!)
- That we will pray for, and respect, those in authority over us.
- That our nation and its leaders will build on a solid foundation – the rock – of honesty, Godly wisdom and the right use of power, for the good of our people and the glory of God – and that we will not build on shifting sand.
- That God will build up and guard our nation, so that it is pleasing and glorifying to Him. Then all will be well, for unless the Lord builds 'the house' and guards 'the city', then all is in vain.

### 1 Timothy 2:1-4

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone; for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity.

This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, Who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

"Supplications" are humble requests (petitions) to God for someone or something. These verses tell us to *supplicate, pray, intercede* and *give thanks* for everyone – in some cases this may involve interceding for things which are right and good, or praying about what is not right. Sometimes it will involve giving thanks for the good things which are happening. We are especially to pray for those people who have a major part to play in the lives of our people, including our nation's leaders ("kings"), earthly rulers, and all who are in positions of authority and leadership, which affect the way our nation goes.

In relation to the above verses, **please pray:**

- That we will lead "quiet and peaceful lives, in all Godliness and dignity" – in other words, we will follow God's ways of peace and lawfulness (not lawlessness, disorder, chaos, rebellion, rioting,

violence, divisions, fighting and turmoil, all of which can lead to fear.

- That we will live Godly lives, following God's ways, which are always best, both for individuals and society as a whole. That we will follow His laws and precepts, living decent (not indecent or immoral) lives, with dignity, humility and love, for God and for other people.
- That this, which is right and acceptable in the sight of God, will lead to people's salvation (knowing and following Him), and come to know the Truth, which is only found in all its fulness, in the Lord.

### 1 Peter 2:11-17

I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul.

Conduct yourselves honourably among the Gentiles [unbelievers], so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honourable deeds and glorify God when He comes to judge.

For the Lord's sake accept the authority of every human institution, whether of the emperor as supreme, or of governors, as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right.

For it is God's will that by doing right you should silence the ignorance of the foolish.

As servants of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil.

Honour everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honour the emperor.

Peter lists a number of ways in which Christians ("aliens and exiles") should live in a world that is so full of fleshly desires, which wage war with our lives.

In relation to the above verses, **please pray:**

(v. 11) That we will be victorious over the evil ways of the world, and the lusts of the flesh, because of the power of God working in our lives.

(v. 12) That our lives will testify to the world around us that we are followers of Christ, and that our actions seek to reflect this, by God's grace and power.

(v. 12) That when we are maligned as Christians, our love for God and our Godly actions will testify to people – and be for the glory of God.

(v. 13-14) That we will accept the authority of human institutions and their leaders – kings, queens, presidents, governors and others sent by God to maintain law and order; to punish those who do wrong, encourage what is good and right, and give praise to those who do good.

(v. 15) That by right living, we will silence the ignorance and foolishness which is in the world.

(v. 16) That we will live as free (and freed!) people, but not using that freedom to do evil.

(v. 17) That we will honour and respect everyone; love all Christian believers; fear God; and honour our Queen.



## Pillars of Society



### INTRODUCTION

**The Pillars of Society** are extremely important because they determine – to a very large extent – how and where our Society goes. Our pillars need to be strong, and for this we need to pray.

The **Structure** of Society is supported by its **Pillars**, and it is essential that these Pillars, in turn, are founded on the **Rock**, and not on shifting sands. In other words, the pillars stand on the rock foundation, and support the superstructure of society above them.

Jesus told the parable of the wise man who built his house on a rock foundation, in contrast to a foolish man who built his house on sand. When the storm came, and the wind blew, the wise man's house stood strong, but the foolish man's house was destroyed. (Matthew 7:24-27).

So even if the pillars are strong, it is essential that they are built on the Rock – and that Rock is Jesus the Messiah, the Son of the living God.

- **The superstructure** is our society – what it is like, how it operates, what it achieves, and what our society is heading towards in the future, for better or for worse.
- **The pillars** are what support that superstructure, and are the major areas of society which we must support and maintain, or else our society is in danger of collapse, at least in some areas.

- **The foundation** is what our nation is built upon – our fundamental beliefs and values, how we want our society to progress (for better or for worse), and whether we can withstand the storms and testing of time; including things that occur which are beyond our control.

If our foundation is rock solid; if our pillars maintain their strength, our society will be blessed, and benefit from all our prayers and efforts to maintain a Godly society. If our foundation is weak, or our pillars are neglected, we will end up with a society which will cause us many woes, and will not be for the ultimate good of our people. In the worst case, our society will be heading for collapse.

The questions we must ask are:

- What foundation is our society building on? What are its fundamental principles?
- Do the pillars of our society support the well-being and welfare of our people?
- Will they support our younger generation in years to come?
- Are our pillars strong enough to continue to uphold a good society and resist gradual decay?

In the Bible, God has given us directions and instructions for building a good society – with a Rock foundation and strong Pillars. This is for the good of our society. Any “shoddy workmanship” – a poor or insecure foundation, or weak or missing pillars, will be to the detriment of our society and the harm of many of its people.

The Bible says, “No other foundation can anyone lay, than that which is already laid, Christ Jesus our Lord.” (1 Corinthians 3:10-15)

On Peter's confession of his faith that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God, Jesus said, “On this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell (death) will not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:15-18). The Lord is the Rock and our salvation (Psalm 18:46; 62:2). To the extent that our lives, and our society, are built on this foundation, we and our society will be blessed.

An illustration of this is the destruction of the first (Solomon's) temple, and the second (Herod's) temple in Jerusalem. Of the second temple, Jesus warned, "Not one stone will be left upon another" (Matthew 23:37 – 24:2). When the people disobeyed God, and rejected Him and His ways, God allowed these temples to be destroyed.

*Christians need to pray that our nation will have Jesus Christ and His teachings, as our foundation; strong and Godly principles and laws that we seek to maintain; and that our society will be strong and blessed as a result.*

"Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labour in vain. Unless the Lord guards the city, the guard keeps watch in vain" – ultimately the house and city will not survive, but collapse – to the detriment of those who live in them. (Psalm 127:1).

Christians' prayers and support and encouragement of God's ways are fundamental essentials to the wellbeing and Godliness of a society. If our society is build on His foundation, supports His ways and virtues, then we will be blessed – both by the Lord and by its good fruitfulness. If we lack these essentials, society will begin to decay and collapse, at least in certain areas.

In the following studies we will look at 12 major pillars which underlie a strong, healthy nation. We need to intercede for these areas to become strong pillars in our nation.

"When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked rule, the people groan." (Proverbs 29:2).

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; the people He has chosen as His heritage!" (Psalm 33:12). May we earnestly seek and pray for our nation to turn to the Lord and follow Him!

## QUESTIONS

1. What do the foundation, pillars and superstructure of a building represent?
2. Why did God allow the first and second temples in Jerusalem to be destroyed?
3. In what other ways did God punish the Israelites when they disobeyed Him and refused to obey His commands?
4. What do *you* think are some of the essential pillars to uphold a good society?
5. What are some of Paul's main thoughts in 1 Corinthians 3:10-15, and what do they teach us?
6. Where do you think our nation stands, regarding our foundation, our pillars, and our society?  
In what ways is it good, reasonable, or very much in need of rebuilding?  
How do you think Christians can help rebuild our society? What is God wanting us to do?

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